

From Adair County to the National Stage, Allie Hixson Led the Fight for Equal Rights

Dr. Allie Corbin Hixson, born into a southern Kentucky farming family, was a wife, mother and educator who at the age of 51 became a fierce women's rights advocate on the state and national scale. A defining moment in Hixson's life came in 1961 when she became the first woman to earn a Ph.D. in English from the University of Louisville, but was refused a teaching position with the stated rationale that salaried positions were reserved for men and Hixson "already had a job as mother and wife." This occurred three years before the national Civil Rights Act of 1964, forbidding the discrimination on the basis of sex or race.



One of Kentucky's most prominent women's rights advocates, Hixson was the co-organizer of the Kentucky Pro-ERA Alliance and the Kentucky Women's Agenda Coalition (1977), an alliance in response to the 1972 Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) congressional passage and campaign for state ratification. She was chosen as a speaker for the National ERA Rally in Washington D.C. and in 1992 became the founding chair of the Equal Rights Amendment Summit. Hixson continued the battle for ratification of the ERA until her death in 2007.

Oral history interviews with Allie Hixson and other women's rights advocates can be found at <http://passtheword.ky.gov>. (Photo courtesy of the University of Louisville)

"Pass the Word" is a discovery tool for oral histories throughout the state of Kentucky. To learn more about this topic, visit <http://passtheword.ky.gov>.